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SDI REPORTS: NOVARTIS SALES CALLS TO HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CLIMB 7% IN FIRST HALF OF 2010

Rep Calls by Pfizer, Merck, and GlaxoSmithKline Decline

PLYMOUTH MEETING, Pa. – Aug. 19, 2010 – In the first 6 months of 2010, according to SDI, calls made by Novartis sales representatives to physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants increased 7% compared with the last 6 months of 2009.

The product most often discussed during Novartis sales calls (19% of the time) was newly launched Valturna. Valturna, a combination of the active ingredients in Novartis' Diovan and Tekturna, was approved by FDA to treat hypertension in December 2009.

Overall, sales calls by the pharmaceutical industry to practitioners decreased 1% in the first half of 2010 compared with the previous 6 months.

Pfizer, Merck, and GlaxoSmithKline, which made the most sales calls in the first 6 months of 2010, each registered declines from the second half of 2009. Pfizer sales calls decreased 2%, while Merck and GlaxoSmithKline experienced larger declines at 16% and 7%, respectively.

“With the number of pharmaceutical sales reps being scaled back dramatically over the last few years, it’s no surprise that sales calls across the industry are also declining,” said Jason Fox, associate director of Syndicated Analytics at SDI. “However, companies with new drugs or newly approved indications for existing drugs need to get the information into the hands of physicians and other practitioners, and in-person calls are still the most popular type of promotion, outside of product sampling.”

When examining key pharmaceutical promotional activities, including drug sampling, practitioner detailing, direct-to-consumer advertising, meetings and events, e-promotion, and medical journal advertising, sales rep calls and details accounted for 36% of the industry’s investment during the first 4 months of 2010.

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SDI is a leading healthcare market insight and analytics firm. It provides the industry's most comprehensive de-identified patient-level data to pharmaceutical, biotech, retail pharmacy, and medical device companies, enabling them to better understand the healthcare market. SDI also serves the government and the financial services, media, and consumer packaged goods industries. Founded in 1982, SDI counts the world's top 50 pharmaceutical and biotech firms as its clients.